

McCarthy Denounces Loyalty Board's Work

By Raymond J. Blair

WASHINGTON, Aug. 19.—Security procedures at the Government Printing Office were denounced as "fantastic" today by Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., after testimony that in five cases workers named in Federal Bureau of Investigation reports as having Communist connections were not discharged.

Handling of the cases was brought out in testimony before the Senate permanent investigations subcommittee, of which Sen. McCarthy is chairman, by S. Preston Hipsley, personnel director of the agency, and Ernest C. Mellor, his assistant.

Mr. Mellor admitted that, in the light of information now available, the G. P. O. made a mistake in handling the case of Edward M. Rothschild, a bookbinder, suspended yesterday without pay after he refused to tell the subcommittee whether he was a Communist or had ever stolen secret government documents.

It was brought out that until this year the G. P. O. operated under a rule laid down by the late Seth Richardson, former head of the government's top-ranking Loyalty Review Board, that Communist membership by

itself was not grounds for dismissal of an employee.

Mrs. Esther Rothchild, wife of the suspended employee, also accused of being an active Communist official here, followed her husband's example in appearing before the subcommittee today. Like him, she refused under the Constitutional guaranty against self-incrimination to answer a long series of questions about whether she was or ever had been a Communist, had helped her husband in espionage or had transmitted government documents given her by Mr. Rothschild.

Mr. Mellor and Mr. Hipsley vigorously defended their handling of the Rothschild case, and Mr. Mellor said a G. P. O. loyalty board did not consider F. B. I. reports listing forty informants linking Mr. Rothschild with Communist activities as sufficient evidence to warrant ruling the bookbinder a security risk when the board reviewed his case last month. "I suggested since we had no information, no new action be taken," Mr. Mellor said.

Sen. McCarthy asserted that the F. B. I. had told the G. P. O. loyalty board several years previously that Mr. Rothschild had Communist connections and had been stealing documents and

that his wife was a "high functionary in the Communist Party." "What information would you want?" he asked.

"It wasn't established he had stolen documents," Mr. Mellor replied. "It was charged he had." "You had a witness who saw him steal them, and you had reports on him by forty informants," Sen. McCarthy said. "This is the most fantastic picture—for the last three years I've been talking about the complete incompetence of loyalty boards. If there is an explanation, we should have it."

Cleared by Board

Mr. Hipsley contended that the G. P. O. had to keep on Mr. Rothschild, who was cleared by a loyalty board first in 1949, until it had the information developed by the McCarthy subcommittee.

"What information did we develop that you didn't have?" said Sen. McCarthy.

"You asked him if he had stolen documents and he refused to answer," Mr. Hipsley replied. "You developed a spirit of refusal that we did not face."

Mr. Mellor said the G. P. O. board considered the reports sent it by the F. B. I. but did not call the informants because it was not the board's custom.

Nor, he said, did the board call Mrs. Rothschild, despite a Sept. 27, 1951, letter from the F. B. I. saying she was an important Communist functionary and the F. B. I. had an undercover informant ready to testify about her.

Asked by Sen. McCarthy why Mrs. Rothschild was not called, Mr. Mellor replied that his board was not an investigative agency but relied on the F. B. I. for investigative work.

Testimony also brought out that Isadore Kornfield, a proofreader, still works at the G. P. O.'s most sensitive building although, Sen. McCarthy said, the F. B. I. gave the G. P. O. his Communist party card number and the date he joined the party.

Sen. McCarthy said Bertha Lomack, a G. P. O. employee, was ruled to be a bad risk but the board was overruled by Philip C. Cole, Deputy Public Printer, and other top officials. The woman was subsequently dismissed when caught stealing a secret paper, Sen. McCarthy said.

Another case, Sen. McCarthy said, involves a man now allegedly working in a sensitive G. P. O. operation who was charged in 1949 on the basis of F. B. I. reports with living with a known Communist.

Sen. McCarthy said another G. P. O. worker was said by the F. B. I. to be a member of the fourteenth Ward Communist party club of Baltimore and a subscriber to "The Daily Worker."

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